

# FORUM

*Internal Party Journal of the S.P.G.B.*

No. 9

JUNE 1953

SIXPENCE

## From America

### REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

What should be the minimum requirements for membership of a Socialist Party? They should be broad enough to include all who are Socialists. There is no justification for barring Socialists from membership. They should be narrow enough to exclude all who are not Socialists.

Since the criterion for membership is based on whether an applicant is a Socialist or not, it becomes necessary to define what is a Socialist.

Broadly speaking, a Socialist is one who understands that Capitalism can no longer be reformed or administered in the interest of the working class or of society; that Capitalism is incapable of eliminating its inherent problems of poverty, wars, crises, etc.; and that Socialism offers the solutions for the social problems besetting mankind, since the material developments, with the single exception of an aroused Socialist majority, are now ripe for the inauguration of Socialism.

This is the Socialist case. It is not difficult to grasp. Membership in a Socialist Socialist organisation does not require being erudite pundits or profound students. There is a unity of agreement among us that the above is the minimum requirement of being a Socialist.

However, there is a justifiable fear that there is a danger that we may open the doors to confused "Socialists," non-Socialists, or even anti-Socialists. This fear exists because a Socialist party is democratically controlled by its membership. An influx of such elements could transform a genuine Socialist party into its opposite. Therefore, we must summarise the barest minimum of Socialist principles upon which all Socialists agree and upon which there is no compromise. The principles that weld us together with a unity of views may be stated as follows:—

#### SOCIALIST PRINCIPLES

Socialism has three aspects, viz., a science, a movement, and a system of society.

As a science, it is materialistic. It recognises that everything in existence is interrelated and in a constant process of change. (In a very real sense, it might even be con-

sidered that Socialism is the science that integrates all branches of science into a correlated whole.) Specifically, it explains social evolution and, more particularly, the nature of Capitalist society.

As a movement, its very essence is to exert all its efforts to arouse the working class and all others to become Socialists so that the majority become conscious of their interests and institute Socialism. The Socialist revolution is majority, conscious and political. Such a revolution is inherently democratic.

As a system of society, it may be concisely described as a social relationship where the interests of every member of society and society as a whole are in harmony; where everyone co-operates by giving according to his abilities and receiving according to his needs.

On these Socialist principles, there is no compromise. On these Socialist generalisations, it might be said we are dogmatic. Our dogmatism applies to processes and scientific analyses. (On the other hand, we do not have any authoritarian dogmas or creeds. See E.W.'s splendid comments on the Bolshevik behaviour, in this respect, in his article in the April, 1953 Socialist Standard.)

Further, we do not compromise with the Capitalist system. We oppose it and are organised to get rid of it. Nor do we compromise in our defense of the Socialist case and Socialist principles.

Finally, the above Socialist summary is what distinguishes us from all other parties claiming to be Socialist. No other party, outside the companion parties for Socialism, holds these views. That is why it is unlikely that there would be two Socialist parties in any one country. Should another Socialist organisation appear on the scene, steps would be taken to merge—we are not engaged in a rivalry to emancipate the workers.

#### THE SOCIALIST ATTITUDE

The Socialist attitude should be one of constantly re-examining our position and activities, especially in the light of unfolding events. FORUM is a healthy and sound

demonstration of such a Socialist attitude. It is a valuable asset in illustrating the fact that thinking is not a violation of Socialist discipline. Socialists must not be afraid to think or express opinions lest they be brought up on charges. To those who view the companion parties as being rigid sectarians, FORUM is a living refutation. In a Socialist party there is plenty of room for differences of opinions.

Whilst it might be said that Socialists are dogmatic, in the scientific sense, on fundamental Socialist principles, i.e., on generalisations and processes, they should not be dogmatic on specific details. We are on sound grounds as long as we confine ourselves to scientific analyses of processes. The moment we become specific in telling history what it must do, what it can only do, etc., history may make liars out of us. Speculations are useful and interesting but not fundamental. Also, we can be sadly mistaken in laying down formulas to be adhered to for all types of problems and situations. Witness the quarrel in FORUM regarding the printers' union (strike-censorship issues).

Illustrative of my point is A. Turner's article in the March issue. It does not take much imagination to hear some rumbling that Comrade Turner has "repudiated" the class struggle and should be brought up for charges. Can anyone quarrel that the Socialist revolution is in the interest of all mankind, including the Capitalists? We become dogmatic (in the Bolshevik-Catholic sense of authoritarian dogma) to consider Turner's viewpoint as anti-Socialist.

Still more effective illustration is the article in the April, 1953, FORUM suggesting (horror of horrors) a "revolutionary" revamping of our Declaration of Principles. Comrades can hold such views and still be members of a Socialist party; for, are they not Socialists?

One additional word regarding what is a Socialist. He is not only one who understands and agrees with the Socialist case *but also does something about it*. Of course, in all fairness, consideration must be given to personal problems and special circumstances.

I. RAB.

## Reply to S.R.P.

# CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE S.P.G.B.

In advising us to present our case to "human beings" irrespective of their social origin, S.R.P. (April FORUM) forgets, or seems to forget, one or two self-evident facts about "human beings."

Human beings are born into society and not outside it, and those here envisaged are the inevitable fruit of the present vicious social system. In any discussion about human beings and society it is important to keep in mind the fact that society is not an independent entity, but a specific mode of production which gives it its distinctive character and determines its institutions.

Each society is only a phase in the development of the social labour process from production for use at one end to production for use at the other. This being a development of social labour (that is, men working together in a definite way toward a definite end) every man is dependent upon the social skill and techniques which he, in common with others, socially inherits, modifies and passes on. In this way past generations prescribe to the new generation its conditions of living and working. The productive activities of men today are determined by the character of the industries they find in existence.

The availability or the number of jobs in these industries is determined by how much profit can be made by the owners of these industries. So that when considering the influence of society on men we should remember that their relationship to the productive process is determined by the class to which they belong. It is undeniable that society lays the broad foundations and imparts colour and tone to the general outlook and habits of men. Nevertheless their ideals and interests, aims and attitudes, are those of their class, and in this sense a man is a product of his class and is identified with it.

However, S.R.P. holds that class-consciousness is not the consciousness of a class conditioned by the specific relationship which that class has to the productive process. According to him it is, rather, the contemplation of a struggle between classes, an awareness of class differences, which contemplation transcends these differences ("has nothing to do with which class you belong to") and resolves this struggle ("it is knowledge that there is class struggle that ends it, not the actual prosecution of that struggle")

One can visualise employers holding classes on the class struggle instead of Music

While You Work programmes, because it is "knowledge" of this struggle which resolves all antagonisms. This is better than any of the profit-sharing or other schemes yet devised by the class-collaborationist tribe.

Then he attacks the "out of date" conception of class-consciousness by asking what happens when a Capitalist becomes class-conscious. The answer is that he acts in line with his class interests. In defeating the feudal nobility the bourgeoisie donned the mantle of the ruling class. Their first task was to eliminate or throw aside all the restrictions which feudal society had placed in the way of the further advancement of industry and commerce—in short, to establish institutions and relations in keeping with their own interests.

The ruling ideas in society are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, in this case the property relations peculiar to Capitalism. When the bourgeoisie became the ruling class their ideas became the ruling ideas and have remained so ever since.

The ideas of bourgeois dominance are inculcated into the child mind, so it is not surprising that workers leave school holding ideas about "our empire," "the nation's prestige," "our democracy," "the British way of life," etc. From the cradles to the grave every man and woman under Capitalism is press and pulpit, screen and radio, and now television. Is it any wonder that millions of workers are unable to see beyond the rule of the bourgeoisie?

Thus the class-consciousness of the bourgeoisie permeates society, even to the extent of placing obstacles in the way of workers—acquiring Socialist knowledge. These obstacles, difficult as they are for a worker to circumvent, prove almost insurmountable to the Capitalist, whose class subjected to a barrage of such ideas from the status depends on his ability to wring surplus value from the workers. He is easily led to

believe that this is the best of all possible systems. He can point with pride to the achievements of the past 200 years of bourgeois rule as being the most progressive in the history of mankind. He can boast of equality of opportunity for all. "If great-grandfather could do it, any worker can do it," "Socialism is a gospel of envy, the creed of misfits." And as for wars, "there were wars before Capitalism—they are the result of something inherently foul in human nature, the evil designs of wicked men."

This has proved such a barrier in the past that even the few who caught a faint glimmering of the truth could not overcome their class-conditioned snobbishness and superiority. They had to enter the field as leaders, with the lamentable results that we know only too well.

"The dictum that Communism is not a mere party doctrine of the working class, but a theory compassing the emancipation of society at large, including the Capitalist class, from its present narrow conditions . . . is true enough in the abstract, but is absolutely useless and sometimes worse in practice. So long as the wealthy classes not only do not feel the need for any emancipation but strenuously oppose the self emancipation of the working class, SO LONG THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION WILL HAVE TO BE PREPARED AND FOUGHT OUT BY THE WORKING CLASS ALONE" (1).

This position is neither "satisfactory" nor "unsatisfactory," but logical and, in my view, correct. But the subjective attitude of S.R.P. appears in all its nakedness when he tells us that if we do not accept his view then we have a position which is "unthinkable"—the implication being that if a thing is unthinkable it is unreal. After 50 years' experience the Party is being advised to return, not to Marx, but to Hegel: "All that is real is rational."

### THE D. OF P.

The idealism in this position becomes more evident when we consider the proposed amendments to the D. of P. In stating "that this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself" the Party emphasises that Socialism must be the result of majority action. If this amendment was carried then no such qualification is contained either explicitly or implicitly. Further, the emancipation of the working class can only be achieved by establishing classless society. Thus the amendment is tautolo-

### IS MARXISM AN ADEQUATE DOCTRINE?

A reply to its critics in and outside the Party.

E. WILMOTT

June 29th 8 p.m.  
at Lewisham Branch Room

gous, and has no point unless one of the following is true:—

(a) That the working class are incapable of acquiring class-consciousness, and Socialism must be established by minority action.

(b) That class-consciousness is not the reflection of working class conditions, the NECESSARY outcome of class struggle, but a theory which is to be drilled into the heads of people irrespective of their social origin

The objection to the emphasis made in principle 7 "that all political parties are but the expression of class interests" arises from the claim that the Socialist Party does not express class interests but human ones, and that class interests to him are no different from an interest in music, stamp-collecting or bug-hunting. This makes the Socialist revolution dependent on the Party. Thus Socialism is not NECESSARY, but conditional upon the ability of the Party to convey its 'message' to 'humanity.' However—

"For us Communism is not a condition of affairs which 'ought' to be—not an Ideal end in correspondence with which Reality is forced to shape itself. When we speak of Communism we mean the actual MOVEMENT which makes an end of the existing order of things. The determinants of this movement arise directly from the conditions actually existing.

"Not criticism but revolution is the motive force of history"(2).

It is not the battle for Socialism which lines the workers on one side and the Capitalists on the other, but Capitalism itself, which can only develop by bringing into existence a class which has to endure all the hardships and burdens of society without enjoying any of the advantages. This is a class which forms the majority of society and performs the whole social labour, a class which can only obtain its barest wants by means of a continual struggle, which eventually produces consciousness of its origin and outcome, proletarian class-consciousness or Socialism.

So that rather than being the evangelistic, non-partisan creed of S.R.P., Socialism is the revolutionary consciousness of a struggle to abolish the existing system of society, Capitalism. Capitalist society is the rule of the bourgeoisie, consequently the abolition of Capitalism is the "defeat" of the bourgeoisie.

"The rule of all classes will be abolished with the classes themselves, because it (the revolution) is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognised as a class and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc., within the present society"(3).

Socialism is inseparable from the working class struggle, and is nothing more than the highest expression of that struggle. This does not mean that Capitalists as individuals have

nothing to gain from Socialism, or that because they are wealthy they are incapable of understanding Socialism.

"It is possible that particular individuals are not always influenced in their attitude by the class to which they belong. But this has as little effect upon the struggle between classes as the secession of a few nobles to the Third Estate had upon the French Revolution. And, then the nobles did at least join a class—the revolutionary class, the revolutionary class, the bourgeoisie. Mr. Heinzen, on the other hand, sees all classes melt away before the solemn idea of 'Humanity'"(4).

My use of these quotations is not in order to "invoke the deities," Marx and Engels, but to point out that not only are the "seemingly self-evident truths of 1904" a legacy from the past, but that the so-called "revolutionary changes" suggested by S.R.P. were advanced and ANSWERED over 100 years ago.

J. RICHMOND.

#### QUOTES:

- (1) F. ENGELS, preface to "CONDITION OF THE WORKING CLASS IN ENGLAND IN 1844," page x.
- (2) K. MARX, "GERMAN IDEOLOGY," pp. 25 and 29.
- (3) Ibid, p. 69.
- (4) K. MARX, "SELECTED ESSAYS," p. 156.

## DAMN THE CAPITALISTS!

### No Soothing Syrup

Has the Party an anonymous capitalist in its ranks, someone who feels ill at ease? The article "People of the World—Unite" makes one wonder, for what worker in the Party gives a dam for the capitalist class?

It has been said that some capitalists would do anything for the workers except get off their backs. Let S.R.P. read nos 2 and 3 of the D. of P., once again. They are short and crisp, and allow for no compromise.

To introduce Socialism, Capitalism must be abolished—the expropriators must be expropriated, including any capitalist who may be a member of the Party. The class struggle will have to be fought to a finish. There can be no question of soothing syrup for the Capitalist class to gain their support

Maybe there are a number of exceptions among the capitalists—so far they have few Engels was the most notable, but he never tried to win the capitalist class over to accepting Socialism.

The article in question is about the most revolting I have ever read in a Socialist

journal. What does he mean by the following? "When a Capitalist becomes class-conscious that doesn't mean he says to himself 'Yes, I see that Capitalism makes us all money-grabbers, makes us distrust and try to get the better of each other, brings wars in which even Capitalists get killed—but I belong to the class that is top dog, so I'm going to oppose a world in which all those things won't exist.'"

All Capitalists are class-conscious, and the very thing S.R.P. says the Capitalists does not say is the very thing he usually does.

What do members think of this statement? "Capitalists and workers alike can desire Socialism and feel it in their interest, because its basic attraction is not so much material gain as the ending of antagonisms." It reads like a message from the so-called "Socialist Sunday School."

As one Socialist and worker I hold that the ending of class antagonisms is not the basic attraction. The basic attraction is that Socialism is the only way in which I and other workers can end our present poverty

position. S.R.P. appears to think that conditions have changed for the better. I agree with Horatio who, in the same issue, stated that conditions have grown worse.

I advise every member who wishes our propaganda to be directed to the Capitalist class as well as to the working class to read again Chapter V of "The Socialist Party—Its Principles and Policy," especially p. 18: "With classes, economic interests govern actions, whatever may occur in exceptional individual cases."

It is significant that in order to make our propaganda unselective, S.R.P. had to amend half the D. of P.

D. W. LOCK.

**S.R.P. will reply to these and a further critic next month**

# FORUM

Correspondence and articles should be sent to FORUM, S.P.G.B., 52, Clapham High St., London, S.W.4. Subscriptions 12 months, 7/6d, 6 months 3/9d. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to: E. Lake, S.P.G.B.

## EDITORIAL

After nine months of publication FORUM is still "full of running." The criticisms of individual contributions have been many and varied, but the interest of members in its contents as a whole has been well maintained.

There is only one black spot—branch circulation has fallen a little from its peak, and this has compelled us to cut the number of copies printed to 1,000. This, in turn, has meant that we have had to reduce slightly the number of words printed, so as not to incur a loss to Head Office Funds.

We know that there are a number of members who would wish to help us out should the present standard of production of FORUM be threatened. We suggest that the best way they can help is to increase its circulation by getting other members to read it. No publication can achieve its maximum possible circulation without some encouragement to purchase being given to those who do not seek it out.

There is one particular criticism that we feel should not go unheeded. It concerns the relationship of FORUM to Party propaganda in general. It has been said that the time and effort spent in producing FORUM detracts from other Party work and would be better spent in other directions.

It seems to us unsatisfactory that members should look upon FORUM as something apart from Socialist propaganda. Its justification for existence is its capacity to aid the rest of our propaganda in four main ways:

- (1) To clear up the Socialist attitude to certain existing issues.
- (2) To discuss new ideas.
- (3) To augment members' knowledge of subjects useful to Socialists.
- (4) To examine critically the techniques and effects of propaganda with a view to improvement.

The important thing is that contributions to FORUM should be relevant to some feature of Party work. It is not easy to draw a line between relevancy and irrelevancy, and it must be left to the good sense and responsibility of members to see that FORUM plays a useful rôle in Party activity.

## CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN TO THE EDITORS

Comrades.

The function of the S.P.G.B. is threefold—education, organisation and emancipation. At the present our main task is education, that is, Socialist propaganda. To hold Socialist ideas and not actively propagate them or help in their propagation is useless. We must unite our theory with practice. But, unfortunately, numbers of members do not seem to realise this. Although they subscribe to the object of the S.P.G.B.—Socialism—they do not support its activities.

Therefore, now that we are in the middle of our summer propaganda season it is opportune to point out that an important way in which we can get our ideas across is the outdoor platform—in the parks and at the street corners. To have successful meetings it is imperative that EVERY member who is physically capable should support his branch's outdoor activities.

If a meeting at, say, Earls Court, is to be successful then all members living within two or three miles of Earls Court should be there at the time the meeting is scheduled to commence (8 p.m.). It is no use members rolling up at half past eight or nine—the most difficult job is for the chairman to get an audience. If there are 15 or 20 members already there when the chairman gets up (with some of them heckling him) then half the battle is won—people will soon come round.

So, comrades, prove that you really want Socialism URGENTLY and (1) support all your branch's outdoor meetings: (2) get there sharp on time, and (3) help with selling literature, etc.

Yours fraternally,

PETER E. NEWELL

Comrades,

Our brow was wrinkled at what seems to us the excessive use of the editorial plural in W. Waters' "About Books" in the May S.S. "We must confess, having had two bites at this book, we have given it up as indigestible. It fails to hold our interest. . . ." The present writers would like to know (a) Can the Party have collective bites at a book (and presumably get the communal burps)? and (b) What's wrong with using "I" when we mean "I"?

Yours fraternally,

S.S. READERSHIP

Back numbers of FORUM (except the first October, 1952 issue) are available from Head Office. There are only a few copies of Nos. 2 and 3 available, and those members who have disposed of their copies should not rely upon being able to obtain single back numbers later on.

A further article criticising "People of the world—Unite" will be published in July FORUM, together with a reply by S.R.P. to all of the articles published in opposition to his case.—Editors.

## WHICH CAPITALISTS SHALL THE PARTY SUPPORT?

If our propaganda is going to be in any way effective on the working class as a whole we shall need to be very careful not to get too philosophical. The workers are in a big enough puzzle just now without our making it more puzzling for them. In my opinion, if we take the advice of Comrade Turner we shall cease to expound the Class Struggle and end up by advocating the Class Puzzle.

It is not a Socialist policy to worry about the emancipation of the Capitalist class from the tyranny of the workers—the Capitalists are already emancipated. It is the workers who are our main concern, not the Capitalists who, it seems, are going to be well off no matter which way they turn. That may be so, yet I rather think Comrade Turner would have a very hard job trying to convince a Capitalist of this—it would be like trying to convince a hard-headed old atheist that there is a happy land far, far away where he'll get ham and eggs three times a day.

### A Defective Approach

"Socialism for Millionaires" may be all right for Bernard Shaw and Charlie Chaplin and the like, but it is certainly not good propaganda for workers. It is all right for the philosophers' classroom but not for the platform—in fact it's bad propaganda for the whole Party case. It is reactionary, and would tend to become conciliative; it is dangerous, cloudy and puzzling for the workers.

We should cut out all the fancy capers and get on with the business of attending to the backward workers, not the forward Capitalists. If some of the latter think Socialism is going to benefit them, well and good—but let us leave it at that.

It is not our job to bother about which Capitalists we shall support. If some of them are going to support us, is it our policy to support them? If we did we would find ourselves in a horrible muddle. They would do more harm in the Party than they would do out of it, and, in my opinion, we should exclude them on these grounds.

What we should really be wary of is not to let slip through our fingers the long, hard and gruelling work of the old members of the Party. The workers are on the move now more than ever before; they are gradually losing their illusions about the men who once claimed to be Socialists. We must not let them lose their faith in us. However, I partly agree in the philosophical sense with what Comrade Turner says, but still, in my opinion, it would be very bad for the Party.

R. SMITH.

# HEREDITY AND ABILITY

## Some Biological Considerations

We are concerned, as always, with relative phenomena, and my general objection to comrades Evans and Rowan is that they are attributing absolute values to things which are relative.

I think we can attach very little value to the "twin method" suggested by Rowan. In recent years statistical correlation has played an increasingly useful part in biological research, particularly in agriculture. Where variations in plants is concerned, strict control of ecological conditions is maintained, one factor being varied at a time. Only in this way are relevant causes of variation isolated.

Rowan's environmental terms "exactly similar" or "more similar," "completely different" or "more different" would at best bring nothing more than a tolerant smile to the face of a statistical biologist. Results by the "twin-method" would be crude and inconclusive. Some psychologists have dabbled in this sort of work with even greater crudity. This is not surprising, for an examination of the terminology used in psychology reveals an extraordinary confusion not found in science. I refer to such words as consciousness, will, attention, feeling, "the unconscious," pain, pleasure, etc. Their use in an animistic sense and the disagreement amongst the different schools of psychology reveal the shaky ground on which their alleged science rests. They are unable to agree even to the basic nature of the phenomena they claim to investigate.

Because behaviourists have thrown overboard the entire clutter of introspective terminology, and approach the study of mental phenomena in an objective way, the very existence of these psychologists presumes their disagreement with them. They did not have to be present-day psychologists, comrade Rowan. The issue has always been—behaviourism or psychology. Behaviourism is essentially a method. I do not know what he means by saying behaviourism is a doctrine which in its pure form is untenable. It is in any case irrelevant as a criticism. Pure Darwinism is untenable, but the fact that Darwin incorrectly attributed the process of natural selection to slight continuous variations, and not to mutations, in no way detracts from his main conclusions. Rowan would do well not to rely on expositions of the behaviourists' case by their critics.

Both Evans and Rowan fail to appreciate the significance of the six athletes. They were not isolated by me, as the latter suggests, but by an elaborate process of selection. They represented the limiting cases of the appli-

cation of our technical knowledge in that field, being for all practical purposes the fastest men on earth. The physiological problems involved in sprinting are much more simple than in distance running. In the former, general technique is largely agreed upon. In the case of distance running there is still considerable speculation and consequently wide divergence in training methods. Thus Zatopec's training schedule differs widely from the usual, and it is interesting to note that the only two athletes whose type of training approximates to his are both credited with faster performances in their particular event.

Although Evans modifies his original statement regarding hereditary variation—he has dropped the word "abilities"—he has still a very confused notion. Natural selection, though it explains most "straight-line" evolution, is not the whole picture. Most important of all, Evans makes the mistake of applying a general biological law to human society. The selective process of the struggle for existence ceases to apply (see Engels: "Dialectics of Nature").

As an example, let us consider a mutation which exhibits a deaf-mute condition. In the animal world such a variation would almost certainly be weeded out by natural selection very rapidly. But in human society the situation is very different. Deafness can be compensated for by deaf-aids, perhaps of the bone conduction type, and also by the technique of lip reading. The mute can talk and think in words by use of the finger sign language. Thinking in man almost exclusively involves the use of words, and just as in a normal person covert movements of the tongue and laryngeal muscles occur during thinking, so a thinking mute can be detected moving his fingers. Man, by means of a social inheritance of technique of his own making, thinks with his tools.

In his reference to leaders, Evans is naive almost to the point of simplicity. The fact of differences in ability is not in dispute. We are continually meeting people who are more able at some tasks than we are. But Evans, not adverse to criticising another comrade for not crediting him with a common acquaintance with the elements of Party theory (FORUM, Jan., p. 7), deliberately misconstrues my remarks. He states that I believe a case for leadership rests on differences of ability. I will not use up valuable space repeating what I did say in that connection: Evans can look it up and read it again for himself. Does Comrade Evans really appreciate what innately superior

thought mechanism's imply? Do we have to resurrect the hoary old myth of the pyramid of consciousness once again?

Evans says "unlike causes produce unlike effects"—correct. But he evidently does not know what this means. Every difference is not a cause. Because everyone, apart from monozygotic twins, is innately different does not mean that every difference is a cause. Examples:—

(1) Two similar bodies are projected towards the earth at different velocities. The opposing forces of air resistance and gravitational pull will reduce both velocities to equality—equal terminal velocities.

(2) Two glasses are placed side by side in a hermetically sealed box. One is filled with pure water, the other with a different liquid, sugar solution in water. Because of the higher vapour pressure of the pure water it begins to evaporate and condenses on the sugar solution. This accordingly overflows, and when the pure water has completely evaporated and condensed on the solution the sugar becomes equally distributed in solution throughout all the water.

(3) A particular mutant of *drosophila*—the fruit fly, possesses an abnormal stomach. Transferred from a moist atmosphere to a dry one this abnormality disappears and the fly becomes normal in appearance. But that the abnormality is still present in the genetic structure is apparent from the fact that offspring, though normal in appearance, revert back to the abnormal characteristic if moved back to a moist atmosphere. Thus *drosophila* of different genotypes (i.e. total gene-endowment) placed in similar environment—in this case a dry atmosphere—will exhibit similar phenotype (i.e. total external bodily characteristics).

This latter example has a further interest to the subject under discussion as it is an illustration of how a particular gene or genes are rendered inoperative under certain environmental conditions. The above three phenomena, physical, chemical and biological, are examples of innate differences in substance, with equal potentiality in relatively similar environment.

Mendel's laws of inheritance emphasise the permanence of the genotype, whilst the fact of evolutionary change reveals a condition of impermanence. This apparent paradox requires explanation. The total bodily characteristic of any particular organism—the phenotype, cannot be regarded as an independent permanent individual. Each separate cell, each molecule and each atom

is continually being replaced from external sources. What is relatively permanent is the general pattern of organisation.

The use of symbols, language and mathematics, means that the organisation of each brain is inherited not from two people, but from society. Most of the learning of the general rules of behaviour goes on early in life. Hunger, sight, pain, pleasure, thinking, are a few examples of learned behaviours. People blind from birth who have been given the use of their eyes in adult life take a number of years to learn to see. Differences between such shapes as triangles and circles are not recognised.

The imbecile finds himself in the asylum not because his fellow-men are faced with an immutable bodily organisation, but because the technique for interfering with and adjusting it is lacking. The limiting factor within the human body is not, I suggest, the genetic structure but the organisational pattern of behaviour. The lower limit is characterised by the pattern of disuse—atrophy—death. The upper limit is set not by parental inheritance, which moves through generation after generation as the shadow of individual man, but by the social inheritance of human technique.

R. BOTT.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “The Chemistry of Life.” J. S. D. Bacon.
- “The Science of Life.” H. G. Wells, J. Huxley, G. P. Wells.
- “What is Life?”—The physical aspect of the living cell.” E. Schrödinger.
- “Biology and Marxism.” M. Prenant.
- “The Mind and its place in Nature.” C. D. Broad.
- “Doubt and Certainty in Science.” J. Z. Young.
- “Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings.” H. Maudsley.
- “Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviourist.” J. B. Watson.

## UNDERSTANDING AND WANTING SOCIALISM

There are two meanings to the word “Socialism” which we do not sufficiently distinguish in most of our talk and writing. There is Socialism(1) (the system of society) and Socialism(2) (the theory of society). The difference between them is well expressed in the document which accompanies practically all our propaganda. The Object defines Socialism(1), while the Principles summarize Socialism(2).

In a previous article (April issue) I tried to show that, while it was perfectly legitimate to say that one wanted Socialism(1), it was a little premature to say that one understood it. It may also be pointed out that while it is quite legitimate to say that one understands Socialism(2), it is quite meaningless to say that one wants it.

There may be some objection to this view, on the ground that there is only one Socialism—the object of all the Party's efforts. Anything else is merely a matter of drawing the implications from this.

This objection falls to the ground as soon as one considers how the Object arose historically. Far from being the first premise of the arguments of this period of intense theorising, it summed up the results of such arguments. It is a conclusion from other arguments, rather than an argument itself. It is the top rung of the ladder, rather than the first rung. To treat it as the first rung is to rob it of its scientific and rational foundation (i.e. Socialism(2)). In fact, Socialism(1), if not preceded by Socialism(2), is degraded to mere Utopianism.

#### NOT SO EASY

One result of this Utopian attitude is the attempt to abandon Socialism(2) altogether. Those who try this seem to do it on the assumption that Socialism(2) is difficult to understand, whereas Socialism(1) is easy.

Thus Comrade Turner, in his article on Selectivity (March issue), says “Socialism is a way of living; living harmoniously with all people.” Anyone can accept that as an

ideal, he will say; everyone can understand it. This is rubbish, of course; nobody can understand it, because it doesn't mean anything. Or rather, it means just the same as saying “Christianity is a way of living; living harmoniously with all people,” and has about as much chance of converting the infidel.

Socialism(1) is an abstraction, and will remain so until we and society between us make it more concrete. The ordinary man doesn't trust abstractions; he knows that a clever speaker can prove black's white, given half a chance. When we prove to him that he could have Socialism now, just for the taking, he doesn't believe us. And in this he shows more sense than a lot of Party members, who go on mouthing the same moth-eaten phrases week after week, secure in the knowledge that they are theoretically right, even if practically ineffectual.

They say, over and over again, that we could have Socialism now; that all that is necessary is that the majority of workers should realise their class position, and Socialism could be established this afternoon. It just isn't true. And those who put it forward can never have thought seriously about what is entailed in learning how to live under a new social system.

Any social system has its order of values, its institutions, its ways of doing things, which become habitual and enter into the whole way one thinks, whether one accepts or rejects them. That is the difference between a system and a chaos. What such speakers are proposing, then, is to change from one such system to another—only the other is a dim and formless abstraction, whose details are the subject of long and acrimonious debate—and they say that this could be done now!

And then they wonder why nobody believes them, why their audiences “can't accept the Socialist case.” Occasionally they try to get out of it by saying that such people aren't politically mature. But one wonders just who is being immature here.

One wonders whether the people in the audience haven't got a better grasp of reality, a greater understanding of the world in which they live, than the speakers who are supposedly “educating” them.

#### GETTING THINGS CLEAR

The first step towards knowing whether what you are saying is right or not is finding out exactly what it is you are saying.

When we say “The first essential is to have a working class thoroughly resolved to abolish the system and establish Socialism” we obviously mean Socialism(1). When we say “Socialists must at all times clearly put forward the principles of Socialism, asking only for the acceptance of those principles” we equally obviously mean Socialism(2). But when we say “The strength of the revolutionary party depends on the number who understand what Socialism means, and whose adherence is founded on this understanding” what exactly do we mean? This statement looks very much as if it is founded on the “implication” theory, which is, as we have seen, dangerously false. And when we see “Much of the support they received was from those who had not grasped the implications of Socialism but wholeheartedly backed political and economic reforms” the cloven hoof becomes even more obvious.

Until we get this matter really sorted out, any argument on such questions must remain cloudy and confused. While it is true that Socialism(1) is complementary to Socialism(2), and that each needs the other to complete its own meaning, it does not follow that we can afford to ignore the primary distinction between them.

And the attempt, in particular, to gloss over this distinction by reference to the object-and-its-implications is full of the utmost danger for consistent Socialist thinking. A further article will show how this inadequate view arises, and the important implications for propaganda which ensue from this analysis.

J. C. ROWAN.

## ON BEING SELECTIVE

In the last three issues of FORUM there has been raised the question: ought the Party to be more selective in its propaganda? The question presumes the existence of a type, group or grade of worker more ready to understand the Socialist case than others.

It requires no learning beyond an elementary school education to visualise a system of society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of living, which ideal is the highest any mind can attain in matters political at the present stage of human history. All the Party asks of the workers is that they learn the elementary economics and unlearn the delusions of Capitalism; the first will largely condition the second.

The seeming slowness of the workers to become Socialists can only be explained by investigating the causes which turns a worker into a Socialist. Practically every event is the complex of many causes and these can usually be grouped under two headings:—

1. Predisposing causes: those which have existed for some time, are often below the surface or, at least, not immediately visible, yet do not produce the final event without

2. Exciting causes: those which come often like a bolt from the blue, are patently obvious, and often get the credit for being

the sole cause, yet would not produce the event if the predisposition was not there.

Socialist propaganda is only the exciting cause of a worker's conversion to Socialism. The predisposing causes are:—

1. Fully developed social production being the prevailing mode of production.

2. The worker divorced from all means of production except his own labour-power and, consequently, divorced from all property sentiment except respect for his own labour-power.

3. Products so well ahead of the market as to be relatively over-produced, including the commodity labour-power, all resulting in a fall of prices, including the price of labour-power.

4. Large-scale unemployment causing insecurity to be more felt, coupled with a market glutted with goods and the worker denied access to them.

These predisposing factors have existed in varying intensity throughout the memories of all of us; it is only in time of war and rearmament that the last two factors are abated in any degree.

If Socialist propaganda is really slow in making converts—and there is no yard-stick to measure it as it falls into a class by itself and has no precedents—we must remember that the average worker has much to unlearn.

The chief delusion of many workers is that one type of worker can be different from another outside their respective vocations, and any attempt to make Socialist propaganda selective will foster this delusion in ourselves, not destroy it in others. Men may differ greatly in temperaments, dispositions, and character, just as they do in their physiques, but these differences are infinitesimal compared with resemblances.

Comrade McGregor asks: would anyone seriously contend that our Party could have emerged from Conservative political circles? I would not seriously contend this. But, nevertheless, a Conservative worker can be just as near to understanding the case for Socialism as a Labour or Communist worker, as he has no more than they to unlearn. Every member of the working class is a potential convert. One can only sow the seed—the exciting cause—on to soil which may not be fertile at the moment; yet this same seed may remain dormant until the soil is made fertile by predisposing causes perhaps not so far away.

Finally, we have to assume, of course, that the Party can confine its propaganda to workers of a special type without committing political suicide.

E. CARNELL

## WAR AND 20th CENTURY CAPITALISM

In this century wars have not merely become bigger; they have become total, global, war. In contrast, the Marxian theory was a child of the 19th century, where the production of surplus value, not the realisation of surplus value, was of primary interest to the young, vigorous, developing Capitalist society. In such a society war tended to be merely a consequence not a dynamic cause.

However, Marx was not ignorant of the rôle of warfare as an innovator, for he wrote to Engels in 1857 stating:

"In general, the army is important for economic development. For instance, it was in the army that wages were first fully developed among the ancients. . . . Here, too, the first use of machinery on a large scale." P. 378-9, K. Marx, "Selected Works," Lawrence & Wishart.

But, as Comrade Evans pointed out in FORUM last October, "It still remains to some extent our evil genius that we see so clearly what went on under Marx's nose."

A striking example of this is the fact that in discussing "selectivity" in paragraph 4 of his contribution, in the May FORUM, Comrade Hayden considers only production (luxury, poverty, and exploitation), and ignores war, as if this were not an essential part of Capitalist society today. However,

this is far from true, for atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, bacteria and rockets, will kill people regardless of their class, and it is to give society an organisation which does not resort to such "solutions" that Socialism is necessary. In this way the need to end warfare, before it finishes us, is the main factor that forces all classes to consider Socialist ideas today.

Comrade Evans is the only contributor to Forum so far who has tried to relate war to his analysis of present-day economics and politics, and he has related the Welfare State to the Warfare State. However this is not the only rôle of war in the world today. I now outline a few relations between war and society, hoping that this will provoke others to start thinking on this subject, and so help to increase our knowledge of society.

In recent contributions the nature of town and country in a Socialist society has been discussed. Capitalism has produced large cities, but is it not now tending to decentralise? The technical possibility came with the electric motor and generator in the 19th century; the need for decentralisation came with the development of long range weapons of war (aircraft, rockets etc.); and the dispersion of industry was noticeable in Germany in the last war.

The relation between natural science and warfare today is important. Much so-called "pure" scientific research to get "knowledge for its own sake" is sponsored by many governments. The lesson of the atomic bomb is crystal clear.

In the application of scientific knowledge to weapons of war techniques are developed which tomorrow will form the basis of new methods of production. Today auto-controls are being developed for weapons of war (guided missiles, aircraft, etc.) and tomorrow when they are applied to industry they will probably raise "productivity" ten-fold or more. Just how much progress has been made in this field is shown by the fact that by 1942 atomic piles were controlled, using auto-control devices, so easily that the operators had very little to do and tended to fall asleep! (p.102, Atomic Energy, Penguin Books, '50.)

Finally, today conscription into the armed services is essential, even in "peacetime," and this period of National Service breaks down many local prejudices. Capitalism is not loath to blow its own trumpet, but the result is not a tune, but a plaintive wail. The more people see and learn of it the less they like it.

ROBERTUS

## THE MARQUIS DE SADE

"Everywhere I could reduce men into two classes both equally pitiable; on the one hand the rich man who was the slave of his pleasures; on the other, the unhappy victims of fortune; and I never found in the former the desire to be better or in the latter the possibility of becoming so, as though both classes were working for their common misery . . . I saw the rich continually increasing the chains of the poor while doubling his own luxury . . . I demanded equality and was told it was Utopian." Thus the Marquis de Sade, impoverished French nobleman of the 18th century, one of the forgotten figures of history, he is today known mainly in pornographic circles, as his name gave rise to the word "sadism" (his works describe the cruelty of the rich of his day in full detail).

His political ideas were far in advance of his day. His definition of "class" can hardly be improved: "I mean by 'the people,' those who can get a living by their labour and sweat."

His biographer, Geoffrey Gorer, goes on to say: "This distinction of classes is founded on property; and with unaccustomed epigrammatic terseness De Sade defined property as 'a crime committed by the rich against the poor . . . theft is only punished because it attacks the right of property; but that right is in itself a theft, so that the law punishes theft because it attacks theft.'

On leadership, De Sade has this to say: "You can only govern men by deceiving them; one must be hypocritical to deceive them; the enlightened man will never let himself be led, therefore it is necessary to deprive him of enlightenment to lead him as we want. . . ."

"The accompaniment of tyranny is organised religion. 'When the strong wished to enslave the weak he persuaded him that a god had sanctified the chains with which he loaded him, and the latter, stupefied by misery, believed all he was told.' War is simply public and authorised murder, in which hired men slaughter one another in the interests of tyrants. 'The sword is the weapon of him who is in the wrong, the commonest resource of ignorance and stupidity.'

As regards prison and the death penalty, De Sade is opposed to every form of punishment: "It is far simpler to hang men than to find out why we condemn them."

In the family group, De Sade saw the greatest danger to equality; family interests are necessarily anti-social. He considered that the position of women both sexually and legally was anomalous and unfair; consequently he demanded complete equality of men and women in every circumstance. De Sade found the greatest causes of European misery in four things—private property, class distinctions, religion and family life. In the future societies he described these institutions had been abolished or transformed . . . He describes an imaginary island where

all priests were banished . . . there were no temples and no vested interest in religion. There were also no professional lawyers and discussion of theology or law was punished as one of the gravest anti-social crimes. There was no money. . . .

As a revolutionary thinker De Sade was in complete opposition to all his contemporaries, firstly in his complete and continual denial of a right to property, and secondly in his view of the struggle as being—not between the Crown, the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy or the clergy, or sectional interests of any of these against one another (the view of all his contemporaries)—but of all these more or less united against the proletariat. By holding these views he cuts himself off entirely from the revolutionary thinkers of his time to join those of the mid-nineteenth century. For this reason he can with some justice be called the first reasoned Socialist."

### QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)

In a previous issue we analysed the answers to the five multiple-choice questions. To deal with the sixth one (have you any ideas on how to improve our written and spoken approach to non-Socialists?) is much more difficult. This question was answered by 37 of the 55 participants and the replies naturally covered a very wide field. It is impossible even to summarise here all the points that were made, so we shall mention only those that were made in two or more cases:—

The Party must become known by canvassing and election campaigns.

Propaganda should cater more for the newcomers to our case.

We should use simpler and less-hackneyed language.

The need for more frequent publication of the S.S.

Some articles in the S.S. are too complicated and academic, and we should avoid the usual rallying "moral" at the end.

Speakers should concentrate more on everyday problems of workers' lives.

More time should be spent on explaining what Socialism will be like.

SOME SUGGESTED CONCLUSIONS TO DRAW (from the results in the January issue).

There are many possible interpretations of the results, but we put forward the following as a basis for further discussion:—

#### IN THE LIGHT OF THE ANSWERS TO

Q1. Members should attach the greatest importance to being active exponents of Socialist ideas and should take every opportunity of discussing them with non-Socialists. Education of members should include the technique of discussion and "button-holing." The effect of our literature is that it seems to follow up personal contact and outdoor meetings but does not very often precede them.

Q2. In spite of the high proportion of our propaganda attacking other parties only a fifth of members replying were enticed

away from them. There is a definite connection (indicated from Central Branch members' replies) between personal contact and holding views not corresponding to any single party line. More than half the potential Socialists we address probably have no special party political views, so we should not over-emphasise our criticism of other parties.

Q3. Again, considering the amount of our propaganda that criticises opponents' policies, relatively few Socialists are made in this way. Explaining Capitalism is the necessary pre-requisite of Socialist knowledge, but it is difficult to judge the effect of the Party's emphasis of this on those who feel they should credit this regardless of the importance they attached to it at the time. One in 9 may seem a small proportion for those who were concerned about the Socialist future, but it is not so small when related to the amount of our propaganda devoted to this. Central Branch members were more interested than others in the question of the future, so it might pay us to clarify our ideas by talking more of it, with a view to including it in our written propaganda, which Central Branch members more often have to rely on.

Q4. We should make special efforts to get across the idea that others can understand Socialism. It might be useful to expand our case on this subject, by dealing with certain aspects of human nature for example. Central Branch members were again more concerned than others with the Socialist future, but the difficulties may well be not with what is expressed but with what is inadequately dealt with or ignored.

Q5. The preference appears to be for the positive aspect of explaining (world events and our case in detail) at the expense of the negative one of attacking opponents. In spite of the uninteresting nature of much of the correspondence in the S.S. there seems to be a reasonable demand for it, which would, no doubt, be increased by answering questions of more general interest put by more typical inquirers. The poor demand for more reviews may be due to the style of reviewing and to the fact that in many cases they were such that they could have been done as well, if not better, by non-Socialists.

Finally, we must make it clear that we have been examining the effect on members of certain definite conditions. This propaganda has made a certain type of Socialist, in the sense that from his experience of it he has evolved certain ideas about how it should affect other people. These ideas must be constantly reviewed if we are to take the fullest advantage of all the factors that are working towards Socialism. We cannot calculate from a questionnaire the possible influence of new factors that may enter into Socialist propaganda in the future, but some of them will no doubt take shape from a critical examination of its present forms.

PADDINGTON BRANCH